

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 100545 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 859

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 3411

EXDIS

DEPT PASS NIACT IMMEDIATE INFO TO CJCS, CINCPAC, AND COMUSSAG

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (LOWENSTEIN, JAMES) (MOOSE, RICHARD); MOPS, CB

SUBJECT: CAMBODIAN AIR OPERATIONS

REF: PHNOM PENH 3339/090250 Z APR 73

1. THIS MORNING APRIL 10 WE GAVE LOWENSTEIN AND MOOSE THE FOLLOWING WRITTEN SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HAD TOLD THEM ORALLY ON AIR OPERATIONS.

2. QTE STATEMENT ON THE ROLE OF EMBASSY PHNOM PENH IN AIR OPERATIONS.

3. QTE PRIOR TO JANUARY 29, 1973 AIR OPERATIONS OVER CAMBODIA WERE CONTROLLED DIRECTLY BY THE SEVENTH AIR FORCE, WITH TARGETS VALIDATED BY KHMER OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO ITS HEADQUARTERS. THE EMBASSY PLAYED NO ROLE.

4. QTE SUBSEQUENT TO JANUARY 29, 1973 , EMBASSY PHNOM PENH HAS ACTED AS AN INTERMEDIARY IN AIR STRIKE REQUESTS BETWEEN THE KHMER GROUND COMMANDERS AND FANK GENERAL STAFF ON THE ONE HAND , AND COMUSSAG ON THE OTHER. THERE ARE TWO REASONS FOR THIS SHIFT. FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT, U. S. POLICY IS TO RESPECT THE STAND-DOWN OF OFFENSIVE ACTIVITIES THE GKR ANNOUNCED ON JANUARY 29; THUS ANY U. . S. AIR INTERVENTION IS TO BE IN RESPONSE TO ENEMY OFFENSIVE ACTION; AND, AS IT DID IN
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LATE JANUARY AND EARLY FEBRUARY, THE U. S. IS READY TO CEASE ALL ORDNANCE- CARRYING MISSIONS OVER CAMBODIA IF THE ENEMY CEASES HIS OFFENSIVE ACTION. THE ROLE OF THE EMBASSY IS TO ASSURE THAT REQUESTS FOR STRIKES PASSED ON TO COMUSSAG ARE CONSISTENT WITH THIS POLICY. SECOND, THERE IS A TECHNICAL REASON FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE EMBASSY INTO THE SYSTEM: TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE COMMUNICATION WITH THE NEW HEADQUARTERS AT NAKHON PHANOM.

5. QTE GROUND COMMANDERS INITIATE REQUESTS FOR TACAIR AND PASS THEM TO THE FAC' S, WHO IN TURN RELAY THROUGH THE EMBASSY TO USSAG. THE GENERAL STAFF INITIATES REQUESTS FOR ARCLIGHT AND PASSES THEM TO THE EMBASSY.

6. QTE THE EMBASSY' S ROLE IS TO CHECK THOSE REQUESTS FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THE OVERALL POLICY, TO PROCESS THEM INITIALLY FOR UTILITY AND CONSISTENCY WITH ROE, AND TO TRANSMIT TO USSAG.

7. QTE ONLY COMUSSAG CAN AND DOES AUTHORIZE AIR STRIKES IN CAMBODIA; HE HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE APPLICATION OF ROE.

8. QTE THE TECHNIQUES USED BY THE EMBASSY IN FULFILLING ITS ROLE VARY WITH THE SITUATION. OVERALL THE SYSTEM IS QUITE COMPLEX; IT IS DESIGNED FOR MAXIMUM SENSITIVITY TO THE POLITICAL ASPECTS RATHER THAN FOR MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY.

9. QTE THE FANK IS DEVELOPING A DASC WHICH IN TIME WILL RELIEVE THE EMBASSY OF ITS COMMUNICATION ROLE IN TACAIR OPERATIONS.

10. QTE AMEMBASSY EMBASSY, PHNOM PENH, 10 APRIL 1973 UNQTE.

11. SECSTATE 065976/100046 Z JUST RECEIVED AND HAVE PASSED TO STAFFDEL PARAS 1 A & B OF THAT MESSAGE. WHAT LOWENSTEIN AND MOOSE ARE PRESSING FOR IS TO SEE THE COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, TO OBSERVE HOW IT IS USED, AND HOW EACH REQUEST IS PROCESSED, TO ASCERTAIN THE ROLE OF VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE EMBASSY IN AIR OPERATIONS,
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TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE EMBASSY CHOOSES TARGETS. THEIR

PURPOSE, MOOSE TELL US, IS TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT WE HAVE A QTE FULL- FLEDGED GROUND- AIR SUPPORT CENTER UNQTE HERE. IF SO, LOWENSTEIN SAYS, QTE IT COULD REPRESENT A NEW DEGREE OF U. S. INVOLVEMENT AND COMMITMENT TO CAMBODIA UNQTE.

12. WE EXPECT LOWENSTEIN AND MOOSE TO COMMUNICATE FURTHER WITH SENATOR SYMINGTON TODAY, EXPLAINING THE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS THEY WANT TO PUT.

13. STATEMENT IN PARAS 2 TO 10 ABOVE, WHEN COMPLETED BY SECSTATE 065976/100046 Z APR 73, REPRESENTS FULL ACCOUNT OF THE ESSENTIALS OF THE NEW SYSTEM. WE WILL GO INTO THE DETAILS MENTIONED IN PARA 11 IF YOU INSTRUCT US TO DO SO. WE DOUBT THEY WILL BE SATISFIED WITH LESS. IN EITHER CASE, THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO ASSERT IN THEIR REPORT A NEW DEGREE OF U. S. INVOLVEMENT IN CAMBODIA, BACKED UP BY DETAIL TO THE EXTENT WE MAKE IT AVAILABLE. PLEASE ADVISE.
SWANK

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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